DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 121 149 HE 007 567

AUTHOR Grose, Robert F.
TITLE Some Factors in the Choice of Amherst College by Students.
INSTITUTION Amherst Coll., Mass.
PUB DATE Feb 75
NOTE 73p.; For related document, see HE 007 569

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Academic Standards; Coeducation; *College Bound Students; *College Choice; *College Environment; Consortia; Curriculum; Geographic Location; *Higher Education; Social Environment; Student Financial Aid; *Student Needs; Surveys; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS *Amherst College

ABSTRACT

Why do students choose to apply and, if accepted, choose to come to Amherst College? To answer this, questionnaires were sent to: (1) matriculating members of the Class of 1987; (2) students interviewed at Amherst College who chose not to apply, and (3) selected secondary school guidance counselors to discover factors they thought important in choosing a particular college. Several questions were asked concerning the strengths and weaknesses of Amherst College with special attention to matters of financial aid and coeducation. The strongest points in favor of Amherst College were size, academic quality, academic reputation, location, and Five College Cooperation. Among Amherst's negative features, lack of coeducation was very widely held to be the strongest, although not always an overriding factor. Location, financial expense, small size, lack of diversity, competition, selectivity, and the nature of social activities were mentioned by some respondents as possible deterrents. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED121149

SOME FACTORS IN THE CHOICE OF AMHERST COLLEGE BY STUDENTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE007 S67

Amherst College
Office of Institutional Research
Robert F. Grose, February 1975

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
	SUMMARY	v
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	PROCEDURE	2
III.	VIEWS OF THOSE WHO WERE ACCEPTED WHO DID NOT MATRICULATE	6
IV.	MATRICULATING MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1978	9
V.	HIGHLY-RATED INTERVIEWEES CHOOSING ANOTHER COLLEGE	15
VI.	GUIDANCE COUNSELORS	19
VII.	THE MATTER OF COEDUCATION	24
VIII.	THE QUESTION OF FINANCIAL AID	27
IX.	DISCUSSION	30
	APPENDIX	37
	Section A...Questionnaires	39
	Section B...Selected Items of Admission Office Questionnaire	57
	Section C...Selected Data - American Council on Education	59
	Section D...Sloan Study Material	63
	Section E...Data from Spies Study	67
	Section F...Data from Snelling and Boruch	69
	Section G...Added factors in college choice	71
	Section H...Bibliography	75

Acknowledgments

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the assistance of Vice President Robert L. Kirkpatrick, former Dean of Admissions at Wesleyan University, for his kind permission to adapt the Wesleyan Admissions Office questionnaire and for providing comparative data from several classes at Wesleyan. Also, my thanks to Dean Edward B. Wall, the Dean of Admission at Amherst College, for initiating the current study and for supporting it. Especially am I indebted to Lois A. Hill for her careful tabulations, alert comments, and fine typing.

Robert F. Grose
January, 1975

SUMMARY

Questionnaires were sent a) to matriculating members of the Class of 1978, b) to students interviewed at Amherst who chose not to apply, and c) to selected secondary school guidance counselors to discover factors they thought important in choosing a particular college. In addition, several questions were asked concerning the strengths and weaknesses in such choices of Amherst College with special attention to matters of financial aid and coeducation. Some material was also available from the accepted applicants for the Class of 1978 who chose not to come to Amherst.

The factors of college reputation, quality of faculty, general atmosphere, quality of students, location, size, and curriculum were among the elements judged very important for college choice although a wide variety of other factors received some endorsement. As for the strongest points in favor of Amherst College, size, academic quality, academic reputation, location, and Five-College cooperation were the most frequently cited. Among negative features, lack of coeducation was very widely held to be the strongest, though not always an overriding factor. Location, financial expense, small size, lack of diversity, competition, selectivity, the nature of social activities were mentioned by varying numbers as deterrents. Other Amherst data corroborate these findings but more incisive and analytic studies are needed.

The response rate, though moderate in three of the groups, was sufficiently low in the interviewed group not coming to Amherst that considerable caution should be exerted in inferences from that set of data. Nonetheless, in all the groups there were a wide variety of positive and affirmative comments indicating Amherst College's great strengths and desirability.

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
TABLE 1	Summary of Samples Used in the Study	5
TABLE 2	Factors in Choice of College	7
TABLE 3	Results of Questionnaire Part I - Factors in College Choice (Matriculants)	10
TABLE 4	Factors Influencing College Choice (Matriculants Class of 1978)	11
TABLE 5	Some Reasons for College Choice - Responses Judging Strongest Factors in Favor of Amherst	12
TABLE 6	Some Reasons for College Choice - Responses Judging Strongest Factors Against Amherst	13
TABLE 7	Results of Questionnaire Part I - Factors in College Choice (Highly-Rated Interviewees)	16
TABLE 8	Factors Influencing College Choice (Highly-Rated Interviewees)	17
TABLE 9	Colleges Which Group of Highly-Rated Interviewees Chose to Attend	18
TABLE 10	Results of Questionnaire Part I - Factors in College Choice (Guidance Counselors)	22
TABLE 11	Factors Influencing College Choice (Guidance Counselors)	23
TABLE 12	Does the Expense of Attending Amherst Significantly Affect Decisions to Apply/ Attend?	26
TABLE 13	RHO - Rank Order Correlation Coefficients	34
TABLE 14	306 Replies to a Questionnaire Sent to Freshman Class of 1977	57
TABLE 15	American Council on Education, Office of Research, Summary of Data on Entering Freshmen (1970-1978)	59
TABLE 16	American Council on Education, Office of Research, Summary of Data on Entering Freshmen (1971, 1972)	60
TABLE 17	American Council on Education, Office of Research, Summary of Data on Entering Freshmen (1975-1978)	61

LIST OF TABLES (continued)

		Page
TABLE 18	Choosing a College: The Importance of a College's Overall Reputation	63
TABLE 19	Choosing a College: The Importance of the Cost of Tuition, Room and Board	64
TABLE 20	Choosing a College: The Importance of an Offer of a Scholarship or Grant	65
TABLE 21	Choosing a College: The Importance of Financial Assistance in the Form of a Loan	66
TABLE 22	The Application Decision	67
TABLE 23	Major Influences Leading to Decision to Enter Liberal Arts College (Science)	69
TABLE 24	Major Influences Leading to Decision to Enter Liberal Arts College	70
TABLE 25	Added Factors in College Choice Listed as Important by 226 Matriculants	71
TABLE 26	Added Factors in College Choice Listed as Important by 68 Interviewees who did not Apply to Amherst	72
TABLE 27	Added Factors in College Choice Listed as Important by 106 Guidance Counselors	73

SOME FACTORS IN THE CHOICE OF AMHERST COLLEGE BY STUDENTS

I. Introduction

Through the years the Admission Office has inquired of various groups as to their views of factors in college choice. With the recent concern about the possible influence of coeducation, or the lack of it, upon the College's attractiveness to students, and the rising costs of private colleges, it would be helpful to know more about why students choose to apply and, if accepted, choose to come to Amherst College.*

Just over 2500 men completed applications for the Class of 1978; 19% of these were accepted. Only 63%, however, of those who were accepted actually matriculated. For this Class of 1978, 158 students were accepted under the Early Decision plan. Since all of these matriculated, the remaining 146 members of the matriculating class of 305 constituted only 44% of the remainder of those accepted.

*Preliminary results relating to coeducation were communicated to Edward B. Wall, Dean of Admission, in October 1974.

II. Procedure

For the 173 students who were accepted at Amherst College in April, 1974 and who chose not to come to Amherst, "Admission response sheets" were available which provided space for each applicant to note where he chose to go instead of Amherst College and his responses to the question: "My reasons for choosing _____ over Amherst are as follows:" This was signed and dated by the applicant and returned to the Admission Office. 130 students replied with one or more reasons (totaling 240 reasons) for their choice of another institution over Amherst

For two other groups of students and a group of counselors, a questionnaire was developed in three slightly different forms based on a questionnaire used by the Wesleyan University Office of Admissions. Copies of the questionnaires are found in the Appendix along with copies of letters asking for the cooperation of respondents.

In Part I the questionnaire consisted of a series of 47 factors or items related to college choice for which each respondent was asked to indicate the relative degree of importance on a scale marked 1 through 5 with 1 labeled "very important"; 3 "slightly important"; and 5 "not relevant." Space was also provided for listing other factors that were not included in the provided list. Some of these are listed for information in the Appendix in Tables 25, 26, and 27. (The respondents did not rate the degree of importance of these factors, however.)

In Part II an open-ended question was asked calling for the strongest factors for and the strongest factors against Amherst College. In addition there was an item asking how important the expense of attending Amherst College was in affecting their decision to attend, and then an item calling for the respondent to indicate whether the fact that Amherst College was an all male institution was a large deterrent, a small deterrent, of no

influence, a small incentive or a large incentive.

In Part III some information was gathered about the other colleges to which the student had applied and had been accepted, and finally, an invitation for any suggestions that would be helpful to the Admission Office.

One group of questionnaires was sent to the 305 matriculating members of the Class of 1978 during August, 1974 with the request to return their materials by September 1, prior to their arrival at the College. At the same time, questionnaires were sent to a group of 175 men who had been interviewed at the College, who had been rated very highly by the Admission Office staff, but who did not choose to complete an application for admission. Somewhat later 182 secondary school guidance counselors selected by the Admission Office staff were sent a comparable questionnaire with the request for a return by September 15.

As can be seen in Table 1, the response rate differed; for both the matriculants and accepted applicants it reached about three-quarters of the group while only 39% of the highly-rated interviewees not applying to Amherst chose to reply. For the secondary school counselors some 58% responded.
NOTE: In summarizing the results, one set of Tables shows the proportions checking the different steps of the scale going from "very important" through "slightly important" to "not relevant" with the categories "very important" and "important" combined. A parallel set of Tables assigns the numerical values appearing at the head of the columns, i.e. "1" for "very important" all the way through "5" for "not relevant," so that a scale score is derived for each item. These scale scores allow ranking of the items also. (See Wesleyan 1973 study.)

The two manners of presentation relate very closely together. Correlations for the three groups of the ranks produced by the per cents

rating the item "very important" or "important" versus the ranks from the scale scores by means of RHO - Rank Order Correlation Coefficients are +.993, +.983, +.980. (No reliability coefficients were calculated, although a visual impression of tallies for successive blocks of 50 subjects indicated good agreement of the extremes at least.)

Table 1

SUMMARY OF SAMPLES USED IN THE STUDY

	GROUP	NUMBER SOLICITED	NUMBER RESPONSES	% RESPONSES	DATE FOR RESPONSES
I.	Matriculants (Class of 1978	305	226	74%	Sept. 1, 1974
II.	Accepted Applicants	173	130	75%	May 1, 1974
III.	Highly-rated Interviewees not applying to Amherst	175	68	39%	Sept. 15, 1974
IV.	Selected Secondary School Guidance Counselors	182	106	58%	Sept. 15, 1974

III. Views of Those who were Accepted who did not Matriculate

Somewhat less information is available for the individuals who were accepted but chose another college over Amherst. It was decided not to send further questionnaires to this group but to use the information already volunteered when the applicants had sent in their rejection of Amherst's acceptance. As can be seen in Table 2, most of these students went to either Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Brown, Stanford, or small liberal arts colleges as noted. With the open-ended opportunity to cite their reasons for their choice, these students listed size, diversity, and curriculum followed by location and social factors. The financial question was not mentioned very often and coeducation explicitly was mentioned by only twenty of the students. Since most of the students above chose large universities, it is reasonable that size and diversity of curriculum were key factors.

FACTORS IN CHOICE OF COLLEGE

173 Students Accepted at Amherst College, Spring 1974, Who Went Elsewhere
(130 students gave a total of 240 reasons for choice; 43 students gave none or did not reply)

Table 2

	Number of Students Giving No Reasons or No Response	Number of Students Giving Reasons	REASONS FOR CHOICE											
			Total Reasons	Size, Diversity	Curriculum	Financial	Location	Social (including Co-education)	Activities	Atmosphere	Family & Tradition	Reception as Applicant	General Reputation	Other
Harvard, Yale, Princeton (90 students)	15	75	139	43	23	5	33	19(9)	4	6	3	1	1	1
			100%	30.9%	16.6%	3.6%	23.7%	13.6% (6.5%)	2.8%	4.3%	2.2%	.8%	.8%	.8%
Dartmouth, Brown, Stanford (29 students)	2	27	53	9	15	3	8	12(6)	1	0	3	0	0	2
			100%	17.0%	28.3%	5.6%	15.1%	22.6% (11.3%)	1.9%	0	5.7%	0	0	3.8%
Small Liberal Arts Colleges * (23 students)	6	17	31	1	9	4	3	6(4)	2	4	1	1	0	0
			100%	3.2%	29.0%	12.9%	9.7%	19.4% (12.9%)	6.5%	12.9%	3.2%	3.2%	0	0
Other Colleges and Univ. (13 students)	2	11	17	1	6	7	1	2(1)						
			100%	5.9%	35.3%	41.2%	5.8%	11.8% (5.9%						
No Answer and Undecided	18	—												
Total Students with no reasons	43													
Total Students giving reasons		130	240	54	53	19	45	39(20)	7	10	7	2	1	3
			100%	22.5%	22.1%	7.9%	18.8%	16.3% (8.3%)	2.9%	4.2%	2.9%	.8%	.4%	1.2%

Total Number of Students = 173

*Williams, Swarthmore, Wesleyan, Cornell, Haverford, Claremont, Bates, Pomona, Oberlin, Bowdoin

IV. Matriculating Members of the Class of 1978

As can be seen in Tables 3 and 4, those who actually chose to come to Amherst agreed fairly well that the top factors were quality of the faculty, size of classes, the reputation of the College, prospect of intellectual and academic challenge, intellectual and academic atmosphere, the size of the student body, atmosphere of the College, student/faculty ratio, and curriculum of the College. These items were rated "very important" or "important" by some 80% or more of this group.

Of interest, too, are those items that are ranked toward the end of the list. These are such things as recommendation of the school counselor, social or political activism, honor code, college for men, family tradition, or fraternities. It should be noted that the general distribution of responses represents considerable diversity of opinions, especially in the middle and lower rankings of factors. There are only a few items that many students are willing to say are "not relevant." Family tradition and financial aid are often the two noted as the least relevant, but some importance is attached to most items by some students.

To check that we had not omitted factors on the list, and especially to help determine the salience of the various factors, we asked in Part II of the questionnaire for the individual to note what he personally felt were the strongest and weakest points of Amherst College as he made his choice. An analysis of these can be found in Table 5 and Table 6.

The strongest factors in favor of Amherst College for the matriculant group were size, quality, academic reputation and location with other items being endorsed by less than 30% each.

As for the strongest items against Amherst College, its all male nature was questioned by 51% and it was clearly the strongest single negative factor cited. 21% did cite location; another 16% financial aid; 10% preppiness or snobbishness.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE PART I - FACTORS IN COLLEGE CHOICE
CLASS OF 1978 - MATRICULANTS
(226 Respondents out of 305)

Table 3

		Very Important & Important	%	Slightly Important	%	Not Relevant	%	No Response	%
1.	Quality of the Faculty	212	94%	14	6%	0	0	-	-
2.	Size of classes	202	89%	19	8%	2	1%	3	2%
3.	Reputation of the College	196	87%	30	13%	0	0	-	-
4.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge	194	86%	30	13%	1	.5%	1	.5%
5.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere	192	85%	33	15%	0	0	1	-
6.	Size of student body	191	84%	33	15%	2	1%	-	-
7.	Atmosphere of the College	186	82%	36	16%	2	1%	2	1%
8.	Student/Faculty ratio	186	82%	32	14%	8	4%	-	-
9.	Curriculum of the College	181	80%	43	19%	0	0	2	1%
10.	Quality of students	174	77%	46	20%	3	1%	3	2%
11.	Flexible academic requirements	168	74%	50	22%	5	2%	3	2%
12.	Five College cooperation	163	72%	52	23%	10	4%	1	1%
13.	Curriculum appropriate to future plans	159	70%	51	22%	16	8%	-	-
14.	Impression from visit to campus	157	69%	40	17%	26	12%	3	2%
15.	Location: rural vs. urban	151	67%	54	24%	20	9%	1	.5%
16.	Graduate School preparation	149	66%	63	28%	12	5%	2	1%
17.	Library and research facilities	147	65%	73	32%	6	3%	-	-
18.	Diversity of academic programs	146	65%	71	31%	7	3%	2	1%
19.	General location	145	64%	76	34%	5	2%	-	-
20.	Preparation for future occupation	143	63%	54	24%	28	12%	1	1%
21.	College vs. university	135	60%	57	25%	33	14%	1	1%
22.	Concept of self-responsibility	115	51%	91	40%	19	8%	-	-
23.	Physical Plant and campus	114	50%	96	42%	11	5%	5	3%
24.	General cultural programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)	112	50%	97	43%	16	7%	1	.5%
25.	Impression from students on campus	108	48%	70	31%	46	20%	2	1%
26.	Impression from interview	106	47%	81	36%	38	17%	1	.5%
27.	Innovative attitude of the college	106	47%	100	44%	17	8%	3	1%
28.	Social activities available	99	44%	111	49%	14	6%	2	1%
29.	College is well known	93	41%	109	48%	24	11%	-	-
30.	Size of the library	84	37%	110	49%	32	14%	-	-
31.	Emphasis on extra curricular activities	83	37%	124	55%	19	8%	-	-
32	Independent Study programs	75	33%	122	54%	29	13%	-	-
33.	Particular department of the College	71	31%	98	43%	56	25%	1	1%
34.	Athletic facilities	66	29%	131	58%	29	13%	-	-
35.	Social facilities	63	28%	133	59%	24	11%	6	2%
36.	Location in relation to home	62	27%	110	49%	54	24%	-	-
37.	Parents' approval	62	27%	93	41%	70	31%	1	1%
38.	Intercollegiate sports program	58	26%	95	42%	70	31%	3	1%
39.	Social regulations	50	22%	132	58%	41	18%	3	2%
40.	Friends recommended it	47	21%	66	29%	113	50%	-	-
41.	Financial aid offer	46	20%	30	13%	149	66%	1	1%
42.	School counselor recommendation	44	19%	78	35%	104	46%	-	-
43.	Social and/or political activism	43	19%	133	59%	48	21%	2	1%
44.	Honor Code	42	19%	99	44%	80	35%	5	2%
45.	College for men	21	9%	93	41%	110	49%	2	1%
46.	Family tradition	16	7%	25	11%	183	81%	2	1%
47.	Fraternities or other	11	5%	109	48%	105	46%	1	1%

FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE CHOICE*

Table 4

*Based on a scale from 1 (very important) to 5 (not relevant) and listed in order of importance.

MATRICULANTS - CLASS OF 1978 - 226 Responses of 305

1.	Quality of the Faculty	1.381
2.	Size of classes	1.578
3.	Reputation of the College	1.606
4.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere	1.618
5.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge	1.636
6.	Size of the student body	1.765
7.	Student Faculty ratio	1.779
8.	Atmosphere of the College	1.790
9.	Quality of students	1.807
10.	Curriculum of the College	1.862
11.	Flexible academic requirements	1.987
12.	Five-College cooperation	2.053
13.	Graduate school preparation	2.080
14.	Curriculum appropriate to future plans	2.133
15.	Impression from visit to campus	2.166
16.	Library and research facilities	2.230
17.	Location: rural vs. urban	2.249
18.	General location	2.252
19.	Diversity of academic programs	2.259
20.	Preparation for future occupation	2.378
21.	College vs. university	2.449
22.	Physical Plant and campus	2.557
23.	Concept of self-responsibility	2.596
24.	General cultural programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)	2.596
25.	Innovative attitude of the College	2.637
26.	Social activities available	2.750
27.	Impression from interview	2.751
28.	Impression from students on campus	2.821
29.	College is well known	2.827
30.	Emphasis on extra curricular activities	2.863
31.	Size of the library	2.996
32.	Social facilities	3.041
33.	Independent study programs	3.062
34.	Athletic facilities	3.115
35.	Particular department of the College	3.293
36.	Location in relation to home	3.319
37.	Social regulations	3.363
38.	Parents' approval	3.422
39.	Social and/or political activism	3.469
40.	Intercollegiate sports program	3.475
41.	Honor Code	3.701
42.	School counselor recommendation	3.827
43.	Friends recommended it	3.881
44.	Financial aid offer	4.080
45.	College for men	4.134
46.	Fraternities or other social system	4.169
47.	Family tradition	4.607

SOME REASONS FOR COLLEGE CHOICE: RESPONSES GIVEN TO AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION JUDGING STRONGEST FACTORS IN FAVOR OF AMHERST COLLEGE

Table 5

	Per Cent Citing Item for 226 of 305 Matriculants	Per Cent Citing Item for 68 of 175 Interviewees Who Did Not Apply	Per Cent Citing Item for 106 of 182 Counselors
A) Size	50%	43%	38%
B) Quality	41%	46%	42%
C) Academic Reputation	37%	43%	58%
D) Location	35%	19%	34%
E) Five-College Cooperation	29%	21%	23%
F) Atmosphere	24%	15%	26%
G) Diversity, Flexibility	15%	6%	8%
H) Curriculum	9%	8%	-
I) Graduate School or other Preparation	6%	4%	16%
J) Attitude of Students	6%	-	-
K) Academic Challenge	-	4%	6%
L) Prestige	-	-	7%
M) Athletic Department	-	4%	-

(Items are included if 3% of responding sample mentioned the factor)

SOME REASONS FOR COLLEGE CHOICE: RESPONSES GIVEN TO AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION JUDGING STRONGEST FACTORS AGAINST AMHERST COLLEGE

Table 6

		Per Cent Citing Item for 226 of 305 Matriculants	Per Cent Citing Item for 130 of 173 Accepted Applicants Going Elsewhere	Per Cent Citing Item for 68 of 175 Interviewees Who Did Not Apply	Per Cent Citing Item for 106 of 182 Guidance Counselors
A)	All Male (Lacking Coeducation)	51%	8%	41%	51%
B)	Location	21%	19%	40%	28%
C)	Financial Expense	16%	8%	15%	14%
D)	"Preppiness," Snobbishness, Stuffiness	10%	-	7%	6%
E)	Fraternity System	8%	-	-	-
F)	Size and Diversity	7%	23%	16%	25%
G)	Intense Competition, Pressure, and Selectivity	7%	-	-	26%
H)	Social Activities	3%	12%	6%	5%
I)	Admission Interview	3%	-	4%	-
J)	Advanced Placement Policy	3%	-	-	3%
K)	Curriculum	-	22%	6%	-
L)	Atmosphere	-	3%	7%	-
M)	Financial Aid Policy	-	-	-	3%
N)	Not in Family Tradition	-	3%	-	-

(Items are included if 3% of responding sample mentioned the factor)

V. Highly-Rated Interviewees Choosing Another College

As to the small group who chose to respond about the factors influencing their college choice for another institution over Amherst, there is considerable agreement in the general dimensions of choice; namely, quality of the faculty, prospect of intellectual and academic challenge, intellectual and academic atmosphere, reputation of the college, atmosphere of the college, and curriculum. (Cf Tables 7 and 8.) Quality of the students is also mentioned along with library and research facilities. Clearly academic matters are things that count among the students we rate highly, even though they did not choose to follow through with their applications. Specific recommendations of individuals does not mean much for this group nor do the facilities, financial aid, honor code, or location in relation to home. Five-College cooperation for the interviewees is considerably lower than its favorable location among those who choose to come to Amherst.

The colleges which this group of highly-rated interviewees chose to attend shows somewhat the same pattern as before since students at Harvard, Dartmouth, Brown, Yale, Stanford, Bowdoin, Williams, Oberlin, Pomona, and Reed comprise 63% of the group. (Table 9.)

When these individuals were asked for the strongest factors favoring Amherst they noted quality, academic reputation and size most frequently with Five-College cooperation and location also indicated by about one in five responses. The negative features, however, are strongly in the areas of coeducation (41%) and location (40%) with 15% adversely affected by the financial expense and 16% by the small size and lack of diversity. (Cf Tables 5 and 6.)

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE PART I - FACTORS IN COLLEGE CHOICE
GROUP OF HIGHLY-RATED INTERVIEWEES WHO CHOSE ANOTHER COLLEGE
(68 Respondents out of 175)

Table 7

		Very Important & Important	%	Slightly Important	%	Not Relevant	%	No Response	%
1.	Quality of the Faculty	62	91%	5	7%	1	2%	-	-
2.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere	61	90%	6	8%	1	2%	-	
3.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge	60	88%	5	7%	1	2%	2	3%
4.	Reputation of the college	58	85%	9	13%	1	2%	-	-
5.	Atmosphere of the college	58	85%	9	13%	1	2%	-	-
6.	Curriculum appropriate to future plans	56	82%	9	13%	3	4%	-	-
7.	Curriculum of the college	56	82%	11	16%	0	0	1	2%
8.	Quality of students	55	81%	11	16%	2	3%	-	-
9.	Library and research facilities	51	75%	15	22%	2	3%	-	-
10.	Diversity of academic programs	49	72%	17	25%	2	3%	-	-
11.	Preparation for future occupation	47	69%	18	26%	3	4%	-	-
12.	Graduate school preparation	46	68%	18	26%	4	6%	-	-
13.	Flexible academic requirements	44	65%	15	22%	7	10%	2	3%
14.	Student/Faculty ratio	41	60%	23	34%	4	6%	-	-
15.	General cultural programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)	41	60%	25	37%	2	3%	-	-
16.	Size of classes	38	56%	27	40%	3	4%	-	-
17.	General location	38	56%	23	34%	7	10%	-	-
18.	Location: rural vs. urban	36	53%	22	32%	10	15%	-	-
19.	Size of student body	35	51%	29	43%	4	6%	-	-
20.	Concept of self-responsibility	34	50%	27	40%	6	9%	1	1%
21.	Impression from visit to campus	34	50%	15	22%	17	25%	2	3%
22.	Impression from students on campus	33	49%	18	26%	14	21%	3	4%
23.	Innovative attitude of the college	32	47%	31	46%	4	6%	1	1%
24.	Size of the library	31	46%	35	51%	2	3%	-	-
25.	College vs. university	30	44%	22	32%	16	24%	-	-
26.	Emphasis on extracurricular activities	29	43%	32	47%	7	10%	-	-
27.	Impression from interview	29	43%	30	44%	8	11%	1	2%
28.	Particular department of the college	29	43%	25	37%	14	21%	-	-
29.	Social activities available	28	41%	36	53%	3	4%	1	2%
30.	Physical Plant and campus	24	35%	39	57%	4	6%	1	2%
31.	Social regulations	24	35%	33	49%	11	16%	-	-
32.	Independent Study program	24	35%	39	57%	4	6%	1	2%
33.	Social and/or political activism	22	32%	30	44%	16	24%	-	-
34.	College is well known	21	31%	39	57%	8	11%	-	-
35.	Social facilities	20	29%	39	57%	9	13%	-	-
36.	Financial aid offer	20	29%	12	18%	36	53%	-	-
37.	College for men	17	25%	16	24%	35	51%	-	-
38.	Honor code	16	24%	28	41%	23	34%	1	1%
39.	Location in relation to home	15	22%	29	43%	24	35%	-	-
40.	Athletic facilities	14	21%	42	62%	12	18%	-	-
41.	Intercollegiate sports program	14	21%	18	26%	33	49%	3	4%
42.	Five-College cooperation	12	18%	23	34%	30	44%	3	4%
43.	Parents' approval	11	16%	28	41%	29	43%	-	-
44.	Friends recommended it	11	16%	24	35%	33	49%	-	-
45.	School counselor recommendation	8	12%	36	53%	23	34%	1	1%
46.	Fraternities or other social system	8	12%	24	35%	35	52%	1	1%
47.	Family tradition	1	2%	9	13%	56	82%	2	3%

FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE CHOICE*

Table 8

*Based on a scale from 1 (very important) to 5 (not relevant) and listed in order of importance.

GROUP OF HIGHLY-RATED INTERVIEWEES WHO CHOSE ANOTHER COLLEGE - 68 Responses of 105

1.	Quality of the Faculty	1.456
2.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge	1.515
3.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere	1.559
4.	Reputation of the college	1.662
5.	Atmosphere of the college	1.677
6.	Curriculum of the college	1.806
7.	Quality of students	1.809
8.	Curriculum appropriate to future plans	1.853
9.	Library and research facilities	2.015
10.	Diversity of academic programs	2.015
11.	Preparation for future occupation	2.103
12.	Graduate school preparation	2.206
13.	Flexible academic requirements	2.273
14.	General cultural programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)	2.353
15.	Student/Faculty ratio	2.412
16.	Size of classes	2.441
17.	Size of student body	2.559
18.	Concept of self-responsibility	2.582
19.	Innovative attitude of the college	2.582
20.	General location	2.632
21.	Location: rural vs. urban	2.721
22.	Impression from interview	2.776
23.	Size of the library	2.794
24.	Impression from visit to campus	2.818
25.	Emphasis on extracurricular activities	2.853
26.	Social activities available	2.881
27.	Particular department of the college	2.926
28.	Impression from students on campus	2.938
29.	Independent Study programs	2.940
30.	Physical Plant and campus	2.985
31.	College is well known	2.985
32.	Social regulations	3.044
33.	College vs. university	3.044
34.	Social facilities	3.235
35.	Social and/or political activism	3.353
36.	Athletic facilities	3.426
37.	Financial aid offer	3.559
38.	Honor Code	3.612
39.	Location in relation to home	3.618
40.	Parents' approval	3.794
41.	College for men	3.838
42.	School counselor recommendation	3.866
43.	Five-College cooperation	3.877
44.	Friends recommended it	3.956
45.	Intercollegiate sports program	3.985
46.	Fraternities and other social systems	4.104
47.	Family tradition	4.773

COLLEGES WHICH GROUP OF HIGHLY-RATED INTERVIEWEES CHOSE TO ATTEND

Table 9

	* Number of Students
Harvard	12
Dartmouth	7
Brown University	6
Yale	6
Stanford	4
University of Michigan	4
M.I.T. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)	2
Kalamazoo	2
Bowdoin	2
Williams	2
Boise	1
Colorado	1
Cornell	1
University of Chicago	1
University of California	1
Detroit	1
Hamilton	1
Louisiana State University	1
Morehouse	1
Oberlin	1
Pomona	1
Princeton	1
Reed	1
Renesselaer	1
Rochester	1
Tufts	1
University of Toronto	1
Washington	1
Western Reserve	1
	66

*One student did not respond and one student chose none

VI. Guidance Counselors

In some ways the questionnaire was not ideally suited for guidance counselors since we were asking them to judge what factors influence their students' applying to college. Moreover, guidance counselors are engaged with a variety of students contemplating post-secondary education and employment so that it is rather difficult to insist that they consider the factors only for those applying to four-year private liberal arts colleges. But the judgments may be of value since they do reflect the opinions of an important and influential group affecting students and their families in the final choice of colleges to which secondary school students apply, and in their choice among several college acceptances.

The elements that are rated as most important generally are reputation of the college, the fact that the college is well known, impression that students receive on visiting the college, general intellectual and academic atmosphere, quality of students, its curriculum, quality of the faculty, and general location. (See Tables 10 and 11.) These are noted as important or very important by more than 80% of the counselors; another 20 factors are termed important by over one-half of the group.

When one examines the open-ended items for the factors cited by counselors most strongly in favor of Amherst College itself, 58% noted its academic reputation followed by 42%, its quality; 38%, size; 34%, location; with some one in four noting also atmosphere and Five-College cooperation. (Table 5.) For the negative features mentioned, 51% of the counselors noted the strongest factor against Amherst was the lack of coeducation. Approximately 28% cited location with 26% concerned about the intense competition or pressure of the College with 25% noting that Amherst is too small or less diversified than other institutions. (See Table 6.)

Yet these statistics cannot represent the enthusiastic support of Amherst by a large portion of the counselors who endorsed Amherst wholeheartedly in one way or another in their comments. Almost all the notes volunteered were highly favorable even if anonymous.

When compared with students actually matriculating at Amherst, counselors put a great deal more emphasis on the fact that the College is well known than do the matriculants. Counselors also feel that friends' recommendations mean a good deal more than is judged by the students. Five-College cooperation is rated fairly high by the students who come to Amherst - it is fairly well down on the list for the general counselor group. Student/faculty ratio, too, is important for the students, but somewhat less so for the counselors. Counselors also are more concerned about parental approval but are not quite as concerned about self-responsibility as are the students themselves.

When the counselors' views are related to the interviewees who did not choose to apply to Amherst, much of the same pattern is discernible. The counselors are concerned that the college is well known and the students are not. Counselors are concerned about students' friends' recommendations and students are less so.

The interviewees do put somewhat more stock in general cultural programs and in library and research facilities than do the counselors, and they are indeed more concerned about the concept of self-responsibility than the counselors reveal. (Incidentally, if one compares the way in which the two student groups rate and rank these factors, the only marked discrepancy is in that of Five-College cooperation which is fairly highly rated by those choosing Amherst. Additionally, slight discrepancies are found in that the matriculating group prefers a smaller student body and is not as apt to rank general cultural programs as highly as those going to the larger universities.

The matriculants show considerably more interest in the small size of the classes than those going elsewhere.)

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE PART I - FACTORS IN COLLEGE CHOICE
SELECTED GUIDANCE COUNSELORS
(106 Respondents out of 182)

Table 10

		Very Important & Important	%	Slightly Important	%	Not Relevant	%	No Response	%
1.	Reputation of the college	106	100%	0		0	0	-	-
2.	College is well known	98	92%	8	8%	0	0	-	-
3.	Quality of the Faculty	96	91%	9	8%	1	1%	-	-
4.	Atmosphere of the college	94	89%	12	11%	0	0	-	-
5.	Curriculum appropriate to future plans	94	89%	12	11%	0	0	-	-
6.	General location	91	86%	15	14%	0	0	-	-
7.	Quality of students	90	85%	16	15%	0	0	-	-
8.	Curriculum of the college	87	82%	11	10%	0	0	8	8%
9.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere	86	81%	12	11%	0	0	8	8%
10.	Impression from visit to campus	84	79%	14	13%	0	0	8	8%
11.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge	84	79%	14	13%	0	0	8	8%
12.	Graduate school preparation	81	76%	17	16%	0	0	8	8%
13.	Size of the student body	75	71%	31	29%	0	0	-	-
14.	Physical Plant and campus	75	71%	31	29%	0	0	-	-
15.	Impression from interview	75	70%	20	19%	2	2%	9	9%
16.	Flexible academic requirements	74	70%	24	23%	0	0	8	7%
17.	Diversity of academic programs	72	68%	25	24%	0	0	9	8%
18.	Preparation for future occupation	71	67%	26	25%	1	1%	8	7%
19.	Impression from students on campus	70	66%	27	25%	1	1%	8	8%
20.	Size of classes	70	66%	26	25%	0	0	10	9%
21.	Parents' approval	67	63%	28	26%	9	8%	2	3%
22.	Location: rural vs. urban	66	62%	28	26%	4	4%	8	8%
23.	Library and research facilities	64	60%	39	37%	3	3%	-	-
24.	Student/Faculty ratio	64	60%	40	38%	2	2%	-	-
25.	Friends recommended it	64	60%	33	31%	0	0	9	9%
26.	School counselor recommendation	59	56%	42	40%	3	3%	2	1%
27.	Particular department of the college	55	52%	41	39%	2	2%	8	7%
28.	General cultural programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)	54	51%	42	40%	3	3%	7	6%
29.	Innovative attitude of the college	52	49%	54	51%	0	0	-	-
30.	Social activities available	51	48%	54	51%	0	0	1	1%
31.	Independent Study program	51	48%	47	44%	0	0	8	8%
32.	College vs. university	50	47%	42	40%	6	5%	8	8%
33.	Financial aid offer	48	45%	53	50%	3	3%	2	2%
34.	Location in relation to home	48	45%	46	43%	10	9%	2	3%
35.	Social facilities	46	43%	56	53%	3	3%	1	1%
36.	Size of the library	42	40%	61	57%	3	3%	-	-
37.	Concept of self responsiblity	41	39%	62	58%	3	3%	-	-
38.	Five-College cooperation	41	39%	50	47%	7	7%	8	7%
39.	Social regulations	40	37%	61	58%	4	4%	1	1%
40.	Family tradition	34	32%	53	50%	8	8%	11	10%
41.	Athletic facilities	27	25%	77	73%	0	0	2	2%
42.	College for men	26	25%	65	61%	15	14%	-	-
43.	Intercollegiate sports program	24	23%	69	65%	4	4%	9	8%
44.	Emphasis on extra curricular activities	21	20%	83	78%	2	2%	-	-
45.	Social and/or political activism	13	12%	75	71%	10	9%	8	8%
46.	Fraternities or other social system	12	11%	83	78%	10	9%	1	2%
47.	Honor Code	11	10%	68	64%	27	26%	-	-

FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE CHOICE*

Table 11

*Based on a scale from 1 (very important) to 5 (not relevant) and listed in order of importance.

SELECTED GUIDANCE COUNSELORS - 106 Responses of 182

1.	Reputation of the college	1.198
2.	College is well known	1.509
3.	Atmosphere of the college	1.623
4.	Impression from visit to campus	1.663
5.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere	1.704
6.	Quality of students	1.736
7.	Curriculum of the college	1.765
8.	Quality of the Faculty	1.774
9.	General location	1.821
10.	Curriculum appropriate to future plans	1.840
11.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge	1.857
12.	Graduate school preparation	1.857
13.	Impression from interview	1.969
14.	Flexible academic requirements	2.010
15.	Impression from students on campus	2.071
16.	Size of classes	2.073
17.	Diversity of academic program	2.103
18.	Size of the student body	2.142
19.	Preparation for future occupation	2.163
20.	Friends recommended it	2.165
21.	Physical Plant and campus	2.170
22.	Parents' approval	2.175
23.	Location: rural vs. urban	2.194
24.	Student/Faculty ratio	2.321
25.	Library and research facilities	2.349
26.	Independent Study programs	2.429
27.	Particular department of the college	2.429
28.	School counselor recommendation	2.442
29.	Innovative attitude of the college	2.481
30.	Social activities available	2.514
31.	General cultural programs	2.525
32.	Financial aid offer	2.567
33.	College vs. university	2.633
34.	Social facilities	2.657
35.	Five-College cooperation	2.684
36.	Social regulations	2.733
37.	Location in relation to home	2.740
38.	Size of the library	2.764
39.	Concept of self-responsibility	2.764
40.	Athletic facilities	2.875
41.	Family tradition	2.884
42.	Emphasis on extra curricular activities	2.972
43.	Intercollegiate sports program	2.979
44.	College for men	3.189
45.	Social and/or political activism	3.357
46.	Fraternities or other social system	3.476
47.	Honor Code	3.764

VII. The Matter of Coeducation

Last year when Dean Wall reported the results of two surveys, coeducation was indeed an issue with applicants but not an overriding one in their college choice. In May, 1973 of a group of over 200 highly-rated interviewees who did not apply to Amherst, 23% of the 137 responding indicated they had been strongly influenced by the lack of coeducation at Amherst whereas 39% indicated that this had a little influence on their choice and another 38% indicated that it had no influence at all on their choice of college. Depending on where one wishes to place the middle group, one can say either that 62% were influenced by coeducation or that 76% showed little or no influence. (See Appendix B, Table 14.)

Also polled was the matriculating Class of 1977. For that group the fact that Amherst was an all male institution was a large deterrent to 8.8%; a small deterrent to 43.1%; of no influence to 32.4%; a small incentive for 10.1%; and a large incentive for 5.6%.

For the current class, this question was repeated. In Table 12 we find somewhat greater proportions indicating for all three groups: matriculants, interviewees, and counselors, the fact that Amherst was an all male institution was considered to some degree a negative factor by 60% or 70% with very few considering it to be of positive value. Of perhaps special interest, although the absolute numbers are small, were the 42.5% among the interviewees deciding to go elsewhere who checked coeducation as a large deterrent. If one combines figures, coeducation was judged a deterrent by 51.9% of the Class of 1977; 61.7% of the Class of 1978; 74.3% of the interviewees in 1974 going elsewhere; and 72.6% of the counselors.

Yet when a large number of possible factors affecting college choice are listed, Amherst being a "college for men" is not noted as being a very

important dimension of choice. It was checked as "very important" by only 9% of the matriculants in the Class of 1978 and only by 25% of the highly-rated interviewees who chose not to come to Amherst, and by only 25% of the selected group of guidance counselors. However, when you ask these groups about the strongest factors against Amherst College, it is clearly agreed that the strongest deterrent element is its all male character. This was noted by 51% of the matriculants, 41% of the highly-rated interviewees, and 51% of the guidance counselors.

DOES THE EXPENSE OF ATTENDING AMHERST SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT DECISIONS TO APPLY/ATTEND?

Table 12

	Matriculants Deciding		Interviewees Deciding To Go Elsewhere		Counselors Commenting On Their Students Applying		Counselors Commenting On Their Students Attending	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Very Important	35	15.6%	10	15.2%	7	6.7%	16	15.2%
2.	24	10.7%	6	9.1%	27	26.0%	25	23.8%
3. Slightly Important	25	11.1%	3	4.5%	27	26.0%	22	21.0%
4.	41	18.2%	7	10.6%	23	22.1%	24	22.9%
5. Not Relevant	100	44.4%	40	60.6%	20	19.2%	18	17.1%
TOTAL	225	100.0%	66	100.0%	104	100.0%	105	100.0%

IN YOUR (OR YOUR STUDENTS) DECIDING ABOUT AMHERST, DOES THE FACT THAT AMHERST IS AN ALL MALE INSTITUTION SERVE AS:

	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A Large Deterrent	52	23.1%	28	42.5%	27	26.5%
2. A Small Deterrent	87	38.6%	21	31.8%	47	46.1%
3. Of No Influence	56	24.9%	14	21.2%	19	18.6%
4. A Small Incentive	24	10.7%	2	3.0%	6	5.9%
5. A Large Incentive	6	2.7%	1	1.5%	3	2.9%
TOTAL	225	100.0%	66	100.0%	102	100.0%

Numbers vary slightly due to those with no response to those items.

VIII. The Question of Financial Aid

Since inflation and other factors have caused a growing increase in concern about financing college education and the manner in which financial aid is distributed, several items were included on costs. Only some 20% of the matriculants noted a financial aid offer as "very important" or "important" while 66% noted it as "not relevant." Relatively it was 41st of the 47 items rated. For the interviewees who chose to go elsewhere, some 53% noted it was not relevant, although 29% did note it as "important" or "very important" with the item ranking 37th out of 47. Speaking more generally about financial aid offers, 45% of the counselors noted it as "important" or "very important" with very few suggesting that it was "not relevant." But even so, among the various factors it was listed as 32nd among the 47.

To gather more information, a separate question in Part II was asked: "Although Amherst College's financial aid policy is to meet each student's full financial need as determined from the Parents' Confidential Statement, did the expense of attending Amherst significantly affect your decision to attend?" Again individuals were asked to check one of five boxes running from (1) very important to (5) not relevant. Some 26.3% of the matriculant group checked expense as very important or important. Even so, 44% noted that it was not relevant.

For the interviewees deciding to go elsewhere, only 24.3% cited financial aid as important or very important whereas some 61% cited it as not relevant. (See Table 12.) The counselors were asked to comment about financial aid both for their students applying to Amherst College and those accepting admission to the College. There was little difference in counselors' opinions concerning the applicant versus attending group, although under 20%

the counselors were willing to say that financial aid was not relevant in each case.

It may not be surprising that financial aid is not volunteered as one of the three strong factors in favor of the College but it is interesting that it is not mentioned either as a negative factor by any significant number of the group sampled. (Only 3% of the guidance counselors feel that the financial aid policy is a negative factor. This is only some four individuals and hardly reflects a serious difficulty.)

Other evidence is also available as to the importance of cost and of financial aid. The Sloan Study as well as the continuing Consortium on Financing Higher Education has information concerning these factors. In the Appendix are several Tables from one portion of the Sloan Study which indicate in the aggregate across a number of classes of the college (sampled were 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1969, 1970) that some 4% of the Amherst respondents considered the cost of tuition, room and board very important; 24% fairly important; 71% not important. These same samples were also asked about the importance of an offer of a scholarship or grant in the Amherst group, some 16% considered such as very important; 8% fairly important, while 75% indicated it was not important. This was the lowest rating of importance among men's colleges and next lowest among the entire sample of eleven institutions. (Tables 19, 20, 21.) When asked about the importance of a loan, some 83% of Amherst students indicated it was not important.

Fortunately we have other information to corroborate the degree of concern about Amherst costs at least for the group attending. Data from the American Council on Education Inventory of Entering Freshmen has been given to the Class of 1970 through the current class. In Table 15 in the Appendix it can be seen that financing education is a major concern to a relatively

small number although the last three classes show a slightly greater proportion. Even so, more than half showed no concern in this realm.

Further substantiation is found in the study by Spies (1973) who included Amherst samples in his determination of the effect of rising costs on college choice. Spies also asked parents about other factors involved in their child's choice of college. Some of his results are found in Section E in the Appendix.

In other words, the data seem rather consistently to indicate that those actually attending Amherst College and those interviewed or applying but going elsewhere do not yet show a great deal of concern about college costs among many of their members. There is evidence, however, of an increase in such concern as might well be expected with today's current economic crises. Of the accepted students who did not choose to come to Amherst and who responded to the opportunity to indicate their reasons, we nonetheless find only some 7.9% volunteering financial reasons for their choice of another institution over Amherst.

It must be kept in mind that all of the student data reported refer to those who apply to Amherst or who at least come for an interview. There is apparently a very powerful factor of prior selection already operating that eliminates most individuals with great financial need from seriously considering Amherst. Data on estimated family income from the Sloan, Spies, and ACE studies, as well as the College Entrance Examination Board Admissions Testing Program (ATP) reveal the majority of Amherst applicants to be much more affluent than many other college applicants. The relative degree of wealth appears to be increasing but it is not yet clear as to the rate of increase compared with inflation.

IX. Discussion

We know relatively little of the choice behavior of an individual student and his family as it progresses through time. The group statistics can only in part point to important variables. The particular reasons, combinations, and the manner in which a variety of factors of different values are integrated for a final choice of one institution over another, either in application or acceptance, calls for more careful inquiry than group self-inventory reports. Nonetheless, it appears that the high reputation of Amherst College - its judged "quality" both in faculty or students, its location, size, and atmosphere are acknowledged and prized by potential applicants. A variety of factors and influences, judgments, and projections apparently can come into play in the specific case of a specific decision by a specific individual.

The generalized reputation of Amherst College is excellent; it is not, however, as uniformly known for its curriculum, its athletic activities, or special social life. There is some approval of its diversity and flexibility. Five-College cooperation has apparently reached a favorable reception among a good portion of the applicants.

As for the negative features of the College, there are several that reveal individual preference. Note that although 50% of the matriculants cite size as one of the three strongest points, 7% note its lack of size and diversity as one of the three weakest points. Of those accepted applicants going elsewhere, 23% cited small size as a negative feature as did 16% of the interviewees who chose not to apply; yet among that same group who chose not to apply, 43% were in favor of the small size.

The guidance counselors, too, differ in their opinions as to the

attractiveness of an institution of 1300. Among the guidance counselors, some 25% noted size as one of the negative features of the College whereas another 38% cited Amherst College's size as one of the positive features. The same holds true to some degree with location. Among our matriculants 35% cite location positively while 21% cite it negatively. Those who did not apply note its location favorably in 19% of the cases and negatively in 40% of the cases. The students who were accepted who chose to go elsewhere noted it as a negative feature in some 19% of the cases. We again find the counselors split in this dimension - 34% cite the location of Amherst College as one of the three strongest factors while a different 28% cite it as one of the weakest features. Note also that location can signify either rural versus urban, distance away from home, climate and other features of New England, proximity to other colleges and so on.

There are several other difficulties in and limitations to the study and its data. It is probable that insufficient care was taken to differentiate the general factors affecting an individual's choice among all colleges from the particular standing on the different dimensions of Amherst College itself.

An example might be drawn from the area of "innovative attitudes of college." It would have been preferable to establish whether or not "an innovative attitude on the part of the College" made any difference or was a particularly salient dimension to the choice of the individual. Then a second question could have been provided to determine whether Amherst College itself was judged to be more or less innovative. Part I of the questionnaire attempted to invite the student "to determine the degree of importance placed by students on a number of variables." Students were asked to check the relative degree of importance of each factor to each one of them personally.

Specific questions in Part II were meant to focus especially on Amherst College's strengths and weaknesses. However, it is quite probable that the two parts were unavoidably confounded in the view of many of our respondents.

Another difficulty is the effect of suggestion. Faced with a long list of plausible "factors" deemed to be relevant to college choice, the person responding to the questionnaire would find it difficult to assert that some were not useful to him. Moreover, the general number of items makes it difficult to volunteer novel factors, especially when many of the items could be broadly interpreted. (Cf Tables 25, 26, and 27.)

Undoubtedly another pervasive influence on the data is the common tendency to rationalize one's decision after it has been made. Especially when possible reasons are listed, an applicant could be expected in some measure to select factors and reasons to justify his choice of college. Note the long list of items volunteered as additional factors by matriculants (also the most numerous group, however.) In general, we must be wary about the degree to which students' responses to questionnaires reveal their true reasons for choosing, even if they were to be fully aware of them.

One way of checking the degree of commonality in the importance of some of these factors in college choice among the students in the pools in which we are interested,is to correlate the way in which the various items were ranked when similar information was gathered at other institutions. The research so far is scattered,although the bibliography Appendix Section H will allow reference to general discussions and specific other studies of college choice.

For the current approach it is possible only to check the findings against Wesleyan data. These are available for 1971-72 on both a) enrollees and b) non-enrollees at Wesleyan. The ranks of the ratings of these two Wesleyan groups correlate +.93. Amherst matriculants correspond with

Wesleyan's enrollees +.72. Inspection indicates very few items that are sharply deviant after one removes the items on "college for men" and "Five-College cooperation." Social or political activism, however, is a factor that is somewhat different, being ranked somewhat lower by Amherst students.

Among the Amherst samples, the ranks of the 47 factors for the interviewees and the matriculated students correlate +.86; for the counselors and matriculated students, +.72; with +.71 between the counselors and the highly-rated interviewees. In other words, a fairly good degree of agreement is found with only moderate amounts of difference in ranks in their grouped judgments. (See Table 13.)

Other information is available in the American Council on Education Inventory given to freshmen during orientation. As can be seen for the Classes of 1971 and 1972 in the Appendix, Table 16, several major influences in deciding about college are indicated. The academic reputation of the college certainly is by far the strongest influence, although parents, desire to live away from home, social life and the influence of high school teachers or counselors or college representatives have some influence. When the question was changed in its wording for the Classes of 1975 through 1978, a rather different set of factors was emphasized Yet the good reputation of the College continues as a key factor. (Table 17.) Here it is noted that any special education program seems to be responded to by a declining number of Amherst College matriculant students with the advice of the guidance counselor becoming slightly more attractive. Wanting to live away from home, however, is endorsed by over a quarter of the individuals, although again, a declining proportion.

In the Sloan Study of Financing a College Education completed in 1974, there were included several questions to samples of alumni of the participating colleges. In Table 18 can be seen confirmation of the

Table 13

RHO - RANK ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

		Wesleyan 1	Wesleyan 2	Matric. 3	Interviewees 4	Counselors 5
1	Wesleyan Enrollees	-	+.928	+.715		
2	Wesleyan Non-Enrollees	+.928	-			
3	Matriculants	+.715		-	+.861	+.722
4	Interviewees			+.861	-	+.711
5	Counselors			+.722	+.711	-

IDENTIFICATION OF CORRELATION GROUPS

1. Wesleyan - All Enrollees 1971-72 (Annual Report of the Dean of Admissions, Wesleyan University, September, 1973)

2. Wesleyan - All Non-Enrollees 1971-72 (Annual Report of the Dean of Admissions, Wesleyan University, September, 1973)

3. Amherst - Matriculated Students - Class of 1978 - Fall 1974-75
   Rank from Scale Values

4. Amherst - Highly-Rated Interviewees (Fall 74-75) who did not apply to Amherst
   Rank from Scale Values

5. Amherst - Selected Guidance Counselors (September 1974)

importance of the college's overall reputation with 99% of Amherst alumni, as well as those of the other institutions checking that it was very important or at least fairly important. However, in choosing a college, the cost of tuition, room and board, is judged not important by two-thirds or more of the Amherst College Alumni sample; only a relatively small per cent, some 4% in recent years, would rate cost as very important. (Table 19.) Similar responses are discovered in the effects of offers of scholarship or loan as noted in Tables 20 and 21.

The Spies study (1973) as revealed in Table 22, confirms also the importance of academic factors for students applying to colleges such as Amherst. He also notes that advice of others seems not to be a strong factor, whereas location, size, and financial considerations follow after academic concerns.

Additional evidence is available from a study carried out with science students who were asked restrospectively to indicate the major influences leading them to decide to enter liberal arts colleges. Snelling and Boruch (1970) found a strong preference for small student body, small class and close faculty-student ties, broad background, flexibility of the liberal arts curriculum and quality of the students at the college cited by most of their students whatever the fields of science and whether the applicants were men or women. (See Tables 23 and 24 in the Appendix.) Amherst students were not included in these data.

As for future study of the attraction of Amherst College for students and of the positive and negative factors that affect student choice, it would be helpful to continue to follow the four groups for which preliminary information is available here. In addition, it would be helpful to discover more of the attitudes of able students who fail to apply to Amherst.

Future work with the College Entrance Examination Board Admissions Testing Program should give further information as to the nature of students a) in the pool of potential applicants, b) in the group that apply to Amherst College, c) in the groups that are accepted, and finally d) in the group that actually matriculates. Especially needed are extensive studies with a few individuals who could be followed longitudinally and in depth as to their reasons for deciding in favor or against a particular college. Very likely this can and should be done on a cooperative basis.

With the popularity of higher education changing, with the rise in tuition and the costs of college, with the current doubts being raised concerning various curricula, it is essential to continue to monitor the factors affecting choice. This is especially true with the addition of women and a number of transfer students to Amherst College.

Finally, the reply sheets in this study occasionally included a negative remark but generally were featured by comments which were both supportive and laudatory of the way in which the admission interviewing, materials, and procedures were handled. There were more than several students who either had not applied or were not coming to Amherst who indicated the great difficulty of choice between Amherst and another institution. The counselors in particular were full of praise for the College and a number indicated that we should not make any changes in our admission activities.

APPENDIX

		Page
SECTION A 1-15	Copies of the questionnaires and their forwarding letters	39
SECTION B 1	Selected items of Admission Office questionnaire sent to the Class of 1977	57
SECTION C 1-3	Selected data from the American Council on Education Inventory of Entering Amherst College Freshmen	59
SECTION D 1-4	Material from the Sloan Study on The Financing of a College Education	63
SECTION E 1	Data from Spies Study on The Future of Private Colleges	67
SECTION F 1-2	Major influences leading to decision to enter liberal arts college (Snelling and Boruch)	69
SECTION G 1-3	Added factors in college choice	71
SECTION H	Bibliography	75

AMHERST COLLEGE
AMHERST · MASSACHUSETTS · 01002

Office of Admission
Telephone: 413-542-2328

August 12, 1974

Dear Member of the Class of 1978:

The Office of Admission at Amherst College is studying the factors that influence college choice. We realize that there are many variables influencing students when they make decisions about the colleges to which they wish to apply and the one they finally choose to attend. We do not know how important many of these variables are to our students.

The object of this study is to help to determine the degree of importance placed by students on a number of variables. To do this, we have chosen most of our items from an earlier study by Wesleyan University so that we may compare the information from our study with that from Wesleyan and other colleges. The results should be useful in improving our admission process. However, in no case will there be any identification by individual; only pooled data will be used.

We are most grateful for your assistance. Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope by September 1.

Sincerely yours,

Edward B. Wall,
Dean of Admission

Robert F. Grose, Registrar
Director of Institutional Research

For the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, Amherst College

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please read the list of variables in Part I before making any decision.

2. Check the relative degree of importance to you of each factor. For example, if the "general location" of the college was a major influence in helping you make your decision, then you should check either 1 or 2. If "general location" was of slight importance then check 3 or 4. If "general location" had no bearing on your decision then check 5. Remember a check in #1 means the factor was most important and a check in #4 means slight importance.

3. Complete Parts I, II, and III of the questionnaire.

4. It is not necessary that you sign this questionnaire. (If you do not object to signing your name, please do so because specific data will be more useful than general data.) We assure you that all information derived from this questionnaire shall be used confidentially and only in anonymous statistical summaries.

43

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART I

A-2

	Very Important			*Slightly Important*	*Not Relevant*
	1	2	3	4	5
1. General location					
2. Size of student body					
3. Reputation of the College					
4. Financial Aid offer					
5. Honor code					
6. Concept of self-responsibility					
7. Location in relation to my home					
8. Quality of Faculty					
9. Social regulations					
10. Atmosphere of the College					
11. Library and Research facilities					
12. College is well known					
13. Student/Faculty ratio					
14. Quality of students					
15. Athletic facilities					
16. Physical Plant and campus					
17. Social facilities					
18. College for men					
19. Fraternities or other social system					
20. Innovative attitude of the College					
21. Emphasis on extracurricular activities					
22. Size of library					
23. Social activities available					
24. School Counselor recommendation					
25. Curriculum appropriate to future plans					

(OVER)

		Very Important			*Slightly Important*	*Not Relevant*
		1	2	3	4	5
26.	General Cultural Programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)					
27.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere					
28.	Flexible academic requirements					
29.	Social and/or political activism					
30.	Curriculum of the College					
31.	Independent Study Programs					
32.	Impression from interview					
33.	Particular Department of the College					
34.	Preparation for future occupation					
35.	Graduate school preparation					
36.	Parents' approval					
37.	Friends recommended it					
38.	Impression from visit to campus					
39.	Five-College cooperation					
40.	Impression from students on campus					
41.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge					
42.	Family tradition					
43.	Intercollegiate sports program					
44.	Diversity of academic programs					
45.	Location: rural vs. urban					
46.	College vs. university					
47.	Size of classes					

43-50. List any factors important to you that we have not mentioned

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART II

A-4

In Part II we would like to know further what you personally feel are the strongest and weakest points of Amherst College as you made your choice of your college. Would you kindly, therefore, note the <u>three</u> factors that were for you the strongest points in favor of Amherst College -

a) <u>Strongest For</u>: _____

_____

_____

as well as the <u>three</u> factors which weighed in your mind most heavily against Amherst College:

b) <u>Strongest Against</u>: _____

_____

_____

c) Although Amherst College's financial aid policy is to meet each student's full financial aid as determined from the Parents' Confidential Statement, did the expense of attending Amherst significantly affect your decision to attend?
(Check one.)

Very Important		*Slightly Important*		*Not Relevant*
1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

_____

d) At the present time a key issue confronting Amherst College is that of becoming co-educational. In making your decision about the College, did you feel that:

The fact that Amherst College is an all-male institution was

a large deterrent	a small deterrent	of no influence	a small incentive	a large incentive

(Please place a check at the point that best describes your feeling)

(OVER)

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART III

1. a) Please list in the order of your preference the colleges to which you applied for admission:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b) Of these colleges to which you applied, please circle each one that offered you admission.

c) Do you have any suggestions which would prove helpful in making the admission procedure at Amherst College of more assistance to prospective students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Thank you for your thoughtful assistance!)

****

AMHERST COLLEGE
AMHERST • MASSACHUSETTS • 01002

A-6

Office of Admission
Telephone: 413-542-2328

August 12, 1974

Dear Student:

Some months ago you interviewed us concerning Amherst College although you did not file an application. The Office of Admission is studying the factors that influence college choice and would greatly appreciate your help. We realize that there are many variables influencing students when they make decisions about which colleges to apply to and subsequently attend; we do not know how important each of these variables is to students.

The object of this study is to help to determine the degree of importance placed by students on each of these variables. We have chosen most of our items from an earlier study by Wesleyan University so that we may compare the information from our study with that from Wesleyan and other colleges. The results should be useful in improving our admission process. However, in no case will there be any identification by individual; only pooled data will be used.

We are most grateful for your assistance. Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope by September 15. Thank you again and our best wishes to you in your studies this fall.

Sincerely yours,

Edward B. Wall,
Dean of Admission

Robert F. Grose, Registrar
Director of Institutional Research

For the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, Amherst College

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please read the list of variables in Part I before making any decision.

2. Check the relative degree of importance to you of each factor. For example, if the "general location" of the college you plan to attend was a major influence in helping you make your decision, then you should check either 1 or 2. If "general location" was of slight importance then check 3 or 4. If "general location" had no bearing on your decision then check 5. Remember a check in #1 means the factor was most important and a check in #4 means slight importance.

3. Complete Parts I, II, and III of the questionnaire.

4. It is not necessary that you sign this questionnaire. (If you do not object to signing your name, please do so because specific data will be more useful than general data.) We assure you that all information derived from this questionnaire shall be used confidentially and only in anonymous statistical summaries.

	Very Important			*Slightly Important*	*Not Relevant*
	1	2	3	4	5
1. General location					
2. Size of student body					
3. Reputation of the College					
4. Financial Aid offer					
5. Honor code					
6. Concept of self-responsibility					
7. Location in relation to my home					
8. Quality of Faculty					
9. Social regulations					
10. Atmosphere of the College					
11. Library and Research facilities					
12. College is well known					
13. Student/Faculty ratio					
14. Quality of students					
15. Athletic facilities					
16. Physical Plant and campus					
17. Social facilities					
18. College for men					
19. Fraternities or other social system					
20. Innovative attitude of the College					
21. Emphasis on extracurricular activities					
22. Size of library					
23. Social activities available					
24. School Counselor recommendation					
25. Curriculum appropriate to future plans					

		Very Important			*Slightly Important*	*Not Relevant*
		1	2	3	4	5
26.	General Cultural Programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)					
27.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere					
28.	Flexible academic requirements					
29.	Social and/or political activism					
30.	Curriculum of the College					
31.	Independent Study Programs					
32.	Impression from interview					
33.	Particular Department of the College					
34.	Preparation for future occupation					
35.	Graduate school preparation					
36.	Parents' approval					
37.	Friends recommended it					
38.	Impression from visit to campus					
39.	Five-College cooperation					
40.	Impression from students on campus					
41.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge					
42.	Family tradition					
43.	Intercollegiate sports program					
44.	Diversity of academic programs					
45.	Location: rural vs. urban					
46.	College vs. university					
47.	Size of classes					

48-50. List any factors important to you that we have not mentioned

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART II

A-9

n Part II we would like to know further what you personally feel are the strongest and eakest points of Amherst College as you made your choice of your college. Would you indly, therefore, note the three factors that were for you the strongest points in avor of Amherst College -

a) Strongest For: _____

_____

_____

s well as the three factors which weighed in your mind most heavily against Amherst College:

b) Strongest Against: _____

_____

_____

c) Although Amherst College's financial aid policy is to meet each student's full financial aid as determined from the Parents' Confidential Statement, did the expense of attending Amherst significantly affect your decision not to attend? (Check one.)

Very Important		*Slightly Important*		*Not Relevant*
1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

_____

d) At the present time a key issue confronting Amherst College is that of becoming co-educational. In making your decision about the College, did you feel that:

The fact that Amherst College is an all-male institution was

a large deterrent	a small deterrent	of no influence	a small incentive	a large incentive

(Please place a check at the point that best describes your feeling)

(OVER)

1. a) Please list in the order of your preference the colleges to which you applied for admission:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b) Of these colleges to which you applied, please circle each one that offered you admission.

c) Which college will you attend? _____

d) Do you have any suggestions which would prove helpful in making the admission procedure at Amherst College of more assistance to prospective students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Thank you for your thoughtful assistance!)

****

AMHERST COLLEGE
AMHERST • MASSACHUSETTS • 01002

Office of Admission
Telephone 413-542-2328

August 26, 1974

Dear Counselor:

We know that there are many variables influencing students as they decide to which colleges they wish to apply and which college to attend; we do not know a great deal about how important each of these variables might be to our applicants. We hope we can enlist your aid in studying some of the factors in college choice. We hope you will be willing to take about twenty minutes to check off your views and return the form in the enclosed envelope.

We have chosen most of our items from an earlier study by Wesleyan University so that we may compare the information from our study with that from Wesleyan and other colleges. The results should be useful in improving our admission process. However, in no case will there be any identification by individual; only pooled data will be used.

We are most grateful for your assistance; thank you for your frank responses. We hope you will be able to return your form by the second week in September.

Sincerely yours,

Edward B. Wall,
Dean of Admission

Robert F. Grose, Registrar
Director of Institutional Research

For the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, Amherst College

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please read the list of variables in Part I before making any decision.

2. Please consider those of your students applying to four-year private liberal arts colleges and check the relative degree of importance for them of each factor. For example, if you feel that "general location" of the college is a major influence in helping them make their decision, check either 1 or 2. If "general location" is of slight importance then check 3 or 4. If "general location" has no bearing on their decision then check 5. A check in #1 means the factor was most important and a check in #4 means slight importance.

3. Complete Parts I and II of the questionnaire.

4. It is not necessary that you sign this questionnaire. (If you do not object to signing your name, please do so because specific data will be more useful than general data.) In any event we assure you that all information derived from this questionnaire shall be used confidentially and only in anonymous statistical summaries.

	Very Important			*Slightly Important*	*Not Relevant*
	1	2	3	4	5
1. General location					
2. Size of student body					
3. Reputation of the College					
4. Financial Aid offer					
5. Honor code					
6. Concept of self-responsibility					
7. Location in relation to my home					
8. Quality of Faculty					
9. Social regulations					
10. Atmosphere of the College					
11. Library and Research facilities					
12. College is well known					
13. Student/Faculty ratio					
14. Quality of students					
15. Athletic facilities					
16. Physical Plant and campus					
17. Social facilities					
18. College for men					
19. Fraternities or other social system					
20. Innovative attitude of the College					
21. Emphasis on extracurricular activities					
22. Size of library					
23. Social activities available					
24. School Counselor recommendation					
25. Curriculum appropriate to future plans					

(OVER)

		Very Important			*Slightly Important*	*Not Relevant*
		1	2	3	4	5
26.	General Cultural Programs (concerts, lectures, etc.)					
27.	Intellectual and academic atmosphere					
28.	Flexible academic requirements					
29.	Social and/or political activism					
30.	Curriculum of the College					
31.	Independent Study Programs					
32.	Impression from interview					
33.	Particular Department of the College					
34.	Preparation for future occupation					
35.	Graduate school preparation					
36.	Parents' approval					
37.	Friends recommended it					
38.	Impression from visit to campus					
39.	Five-College cooperation					
40.	Impression from students on campus					
41.	Prospect of intellectual and academic challenge					
42.	Family tradition					
43.	Intercollegiate sports program					
44.	Diversity of academic programs					
45.	Location: rural vs. urban					
46.	College vs. university					
47.	Size of classes					

48-50. List any factors important to you that we have not mentioned

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART II

A-14

In Part II we would like to know further what you personally feel are the strongest and weakest points of Amherst College as students consider it among other colleges. Would you kindly, therefore, note by number or otherwise, the <u>three</u> factors that are for you the strongest points in favor of Amherst College -

a) <u>Strongest For</u>: _____

_____

_____

and the <u>three</u> factors which weigh in your mind most heavily against Amherst College:

b) <u>Strongest Against</u>: _____

_____

_____

c) Although Amherst College's financial aid policy is to meet each student's full financial need as determined from the Parents' Confidential Statement, does the expense of attending Amherst College significantly affect your students' decisions a) to apply or not to apply, b) to attend or not to attend?

	Very Important		*Slightly Important*		*Not Relevant*
Apply:	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Important		*Slightly Important*		*Not Relevant*
Attend:	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

_____

d) At the present time a key issue confronting Amherst College is that of becoming co-educational. As your students make decisions about the College, do you feel that:

The fact that Amherst College is an all-male institution is

a large deterrent	a small deterrent	of no influence	a small incentive	a large incentive

(Please place a check at the point that best describes your feeling)

(OVER)

e) Do you have any suggestions which would prove helpful in making the admission procedure at Amherst College of more assistance to prospective students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Thank you for your thoughtful assistance!)

****

306 REPLIES TO A QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO FRESHMAN CLASS OF 1977

Table 14 B-1

	A Large Deterrent	A Small Deterrent	Of No Influence	A Small Incentive	A Large Incentive	
The fact that Amherst College is an all-male institution was:	8.8%	43.1%	32.4%	10.1%	5.6%	= 100%
The fact that Amherst has only 1200 students (as opposed, for example, to the increase to 1800 at Williams and to 2200 at Wesleyan) was:	-	3.3%	7.5%	30.4%	58.8%	= 100%
The fact that no Amherst College credit is granted for advanced placement high school courses was:	3.9%	19.6%	74.5%	1.0%	1.0%	= 100%
The cost of attending Amherst, taking into account any financial award you may have received was:	6.5%	24.6%	55.9%	6.5%	6.5%	= 100%
The treatment of your admission application (including forms, testing requirements, interview and other personal contact, deadlines, etc.) was:	.3%	4.6%	23.2%	33.7%	38.2%	= 100%

From Dean Edward B. Wall's Report to the Faculty of the Dean of Admission (with appendices). Amherst, Mass: Amherst College, September 11, 1973.

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, OFFICE OF RESEARCH
SUMMARY OF DATA ON ENTERING FRESHMEN

Table 15
C-1

	Class of 1970	Class of 1971	Class of 1972	Class of 1973	Class of 1974	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978
Concern About Financing Education									
None	54.2	54.6	49.7	48.0	44.1	46.5	48.1	53.1	48.5
Some concern	43.3	44.0	48.0	48.7	51.0	51.3	43.8	39.4	45.4
Major concern	2.6	1.4	2.3	3.4	4.9	2.2	8.1	7.5	6.2

Table 16
C-2

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, OFFICE OF RESEARCH
SUMMARY OF DATA ON ENTERING FRESHMEN

	Class of 1971	Class of 1972
Major Influences in Deciding to Attend this College		
Parent or other relative	36.7	46.4
High School teacher or counselor	21.5	25.5
Friends attending this College	17.5	11.4
Grad or other college representative	28.3	25.5
Counseling of placement service	2.4	3.6
Athletic program of the College	10.1	10.1
Other extracurricular activities	8.4	12.7
Social life of the College	27.6	24.2
Chance to live away from home	24.2	23.9
Low cost	2.0	1.6
Academic reputation of the College	96.3	89.9
Most students are like me	9.4	7.2
Religious affiliation	0.0	0.0

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, OFFICE OF RESEARCH
SUMMARY OF DATA ON ENTERING FRESHMEN

Table 17
C-3

Reasons Noted as Very Important in Selecting This College	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Norms - Fall 1974 All Inst. (Male)	Norms - Fall 1974 4-Yr. Priv. Non-Sect.
Relatives wanted me to come here	4.1	1.6	2.2	3.4	6.2	4.4
College has good reputation	62.8	95.5	92.8	92.1	45.8	73.1
Most friends going to this College	0.3	0.0	-	-	-	-
Low tuition	0.3	0.0	0.3	1.4	27.1	6.6
Advice of someone who attended	16.8	14.8	19.9	15.8	17.0	17.7
Special Educ. program offered	38.2	27.5	19.4	16.1	25.0	27.8
Not accepted anywhere else	3.5	0.7	-	-	-	-
Advice of guidance counselor	5.1	5.2	11.4	13.8	9.5	12.3
Wanted to live at home	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	12.8	3.7
Wanted to live away from home	-	39.2	29.0	25.0	10.8	17.7
Offered financial assistance	-	19.8	15.7	17.4	18.2	24.3
Has a good athletic program	-	10.7	-	-	-	-
Teacher advised me	-	-	5.4	7.6	5.1	6.9
Could not get a job	-	-	0.0	1.4	3.1	1.4

Table
18
D-1

CHOOSING A COLLEGE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF A COLLEGE'S OVERALL REPUTATION

	Responses	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Reported
Class of 1952	1,026	82%	16%	1%	1%
1957	1,024	84	14	1	1
1962	1,085	86	13	1	-
1967	1,204	86	12	1	1
1969	1,140	86	13	1	-
1970	1,232	84	15	1	-
Total:	6,711	85%	14%	1%	-%
Amherst	694	84%	15%	1%	-%
Brown	613	73	25	2	-
Dartmouth	723	85	14	-	1
Harvard	600	90	8	1	1
MIT	659	91	9	-	-
Princeton	662	89	10	-	1
Wesleyan	556	78	21	1	-
Mount Holyoke	584	86	12	1	1
Pembroke	489	80	18	1	1
Radcliffe	591	89	10	-	1
Wellesley	540	90	9	-	1

The Sloan Study Consortium, 1974
The Financing of a College Education.
Page 6.

Table
19
D-2

CHOOSING A COLLEGE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COST OF TUITION, ROOM AND BOARD

	Responses	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Reported
Class of 1952	1,026	9%	31%	57%	3%
1957	1,024	9%	30	58	3
1962	1,085	4%	26	68	2
1967	1,204	4%	23	71	2
1969	1,140	4%	24	70	2
1970	1,232	4%	22	73	1
Total:	6,711	5%	26%	67%	2%
Amherst	694	4%	24%	71%	1%
Brown	613	9	29	61	1
Dartmouth	723	4	29	65	2
Harvard	600	5	22	70	3
MIT	659	5	31	62	2
Princeton	662	3	24	71	2
Wesleyan	556	8	27	63	2
Mount Holyoke	584	5	26	66	3
Pembroke	489	10	33	56	1
Radcliffe	591	5	18	74	3
Wellesley	540	4	21	73	2

The Sloan Study Consortium, 1974
The Financing of a College Education.
Page 8.

Table
20
D-3

CHOOSING A COLLEGE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN OFFER OF A SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT

	Responses	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Reported
Class of 1952	1,026	17%	10%	70%	3%
1957	1,024	24	8	65	3
1962	1,085	22	10	67	1
1967	1,204	23	12	64	1
1969	1,140	23	12	64	1
1970	1,232	23	11	65	1
Total:	6,711	22%	10%	66%	2%
Amherst	694	16%	8%	75%	1%
Brown	613	25	12	61	2
Dartmouth	723	22	9	68	1
Harvard	600	24	11	62	3
MIT	659	25	19	55	1
Princeton	662	25	11	61	3
Wesleyan	556	28	9	62	1
Mount Holyoke	584	19	8	71	2
Pembroke	489	25	10	64	1
Radcliffe	591	19	10	69	2
Wellesley	540	14	7	77	2

The Sloan Study Consortium, 1974
The Financing of a College Education.
Page 10.

CHOOSING A COLLEGE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF A LOAN

	Responses	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Reported
Class of 1952	1,026	3%	5%	86%	6%
1957	1,024	4	9	83	4
1962	1,085	6	11	80	3
1967	1,204	11	15	72	2
1969	1,140	12	16	70	2
1970	1,232	10	17	72	1
Total:	6,711	8%	12%	77%	3%
Amherst	694	5%	10%	83%	2%
Brown	613	9	14	74	3
Dartmouth	723	11	12	75	2
Harvard	600	7	14	75	4
MIT	659	14	17	67	2
Princeton	662	10	16	72	2
Wesleyan	556	6	10	81	3
Mount Holyoke	584	7	10	80	3
Pembroke	489	10	11	77	2
Radcliffe	591	4	10	81	5
Wellesley	540	4	11	83	2

The Sloan Study Consortium, 1974
The Financing of a College Education.
Page 12.

Table 22 E-1

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 10 OF THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION 10: Please circle the number which shows how important *each* of these factors was in your child's selection of a college.

(N = 1,574; *in per cent*)

	Very Important	*Fairly Important*	*Not Important*	*No Response*
A. Total Responses				
Financial considerations:				
The cost of tuition, room, and board	34	31	30	5
An offer of financial assistance	23	8	54	15
Academic considerations:				
The college's over-all reputation	56	35	5	4
Your child's desired field of study	55	27	11	7
The advice of others:				
The advice of school counselors and other adults	17	37	35	11
The advice of other young people	8	25	50	17
Location and size:				
The distance of the college from your home	20	35	41	4
The type of setting or section of the country	21	33	40	6
The size of the college	25	32	37	6
B. Distribution of Responses by Sex				
Financial considerations:				
The cost of tuition, room, and board:				
Male	31	30	32	7
Female	37	32	26	5
An offer of financial assistance:				
Male	24	7	54	15
Female	21	10	54	15
Academic considerations:				
The college's over-all reputation:				
Male	57	34	4	5
Female	52	37	6	5
Your child's desired field of study:				
Male	56	26	10	8
Female	52	29	13	6
The advice of others:				
The advice of school counselors and other adults:				
Male	17	40	32	11
Female	16	34	39	11
The advice of other young people:				
Male	8	23	51	18
Female	8	29	49	14
Location and size:				
The distance of the college from your home:				
Male	18	34	43	5
Female	21	37	38	4
The type of setting or section of the country:				
Male	20	31	42	7
Female	23	35	36	6
The size of the college:				
Male	23	32	39	6
Female	27	32	35	6
C. Distribution of Responses by Family Income				
Financial considerations:				
The cost of tuition, room, and board:				
Under $7,500	52	24	12	12
$7,500–15,000	49	30	15	6
$15,000–30,000	28	37	30	5
Over $30,000	11	21	62	6
An offer of financial assistance:				
Under $7,500	51	14	18	17
$7,500–15,000	38	12	33	17
$15,000–30,000	14	9	62	15
Over $30,000	5	2	84	9
Academic considerations:				
The college's over-all reputation:				
Under $7,500	57	28	5	10
$7,500–15,000	55	35	5	5
$15,000–30,000	53	38	5	4
Over $30,000	54	38	6	2
Your child's desired field of study:				
Under $7,500	51	26	12	11
$7,500–15,000	57	28	8	7
$15,000–30,000	53	27	13	7
Over $30,000	44	34	15	7
The advice of others:				
The advice of school counselors and other adults:				
Under $7,500	16	41	28	15
$7,500–15,000	19	37	32	12
$15,000–$30,000	13	38	38	11
Over $30,000	15	39	36	10
The advice of other young people:				
Under $7,500	12	25	42	21
$7,500–15,000	9	25	47	19
$15,000–30,000	6	24	54	16
Over $30,000	11	24	49	16
Location and size:				
The distance of the college from your home:				
Under $7,500	28	34	31	7
$7,500–15,000	24	35	36	5
$15,000–30,000	15	37	44	4
Over $30,000	15	29	51	5
The type of setting or section of the country:				
Under $7,500	16	32	38	14
$7,500–15,000	18	30	43	9
$15,000–30,000	21	34	41	4
Over $30,000	26	39	30	5
The size of the college:				
Under $7,500	18	32	36	14
$7,500–15,000	24	27	42	7
$15,000–30,000	24	32	39	6
Over $30,000	31	39	25	5

From Spies, Richard R. The Future of Private Colleges: The Effect of Rising Costs on College Choice, Princeton, N.J.: Industrial Relations Section, Princeton University, 1973.

Table 23 F-1

MAJOR INFLUENCES LEADING TO DECISION TO ENTER LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

	Biology N = 5996	Chemistry N = 3362	Math N = 3666	Physics N = 2045	Pre-Med N = 1329
Small student body	69.1	66.1	66.5	58.6	69.5
Flexibility of liberal arts curriculum	45.1	40.3	45.9	38.6	39.1
Small class & close faculty-student ties	73.9	71.5	65.4	63.3	74.1
Activities less competitive than at larger schools	11.2	9.4	10.5	8.5	14.2
Broad background offered by the liberal arts	54.6	49.6	51.9	48.9	50.5
Relatives attended the college	7.3	7.3	7.7	7.3	11.4
Close friends were attending	3.8	3.4	3.1	3.6	6.8
College was near home	7.1	8.8	10.3	11.6	9.7
College was far away	5.5	5.7	6.2	4.7	3.7
Scholarship was granted	17.3	25.9	25.9	25.5	14.0
College noted for strength in math and science	25.5	29.7	14.9	22.2	51.7
Admission was assured	8.6	9.0	9.6	9.4	7.1
Impressed by college facilities	29.8	24.4	23.5	17.5	25.1
Impressed by science facilities	13.0	12.5	6.1	8.8	18.6
Promotion of alumni	6.6	6.5	5.7	6.0	8.9
Opposite sex close at hand	11.3	9.2	11.5	9.6	8.9
Recommendation by school counselor	11.9	11.2	12.3	10.9	11.2
Recommendation by high school science teacher	5.0	6.1	6.7	6.4	5.1
Parents wanted liberal arts college	13.1	11.1	12.7	11.8	11.7
Influence of admissions staff	8.9	7.5	7.6	6.5	5.8
Quality of students in the college	53.4	45.7	46.6	41.5	54.7
Influence of church	2.9	2.2	2.9	2.4	4.2

Snelling, W. Rodman and Boruch, Robert
Factors Influencing Student Choice of College and Course of Study.
(Reprinted from Journal of Chemical Education, Vol. 47, Page 328
May, 1970.

MAJOR INFLUENCES LEADING TO DECISION
TO ENTER LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Table 24 F-2

	Male Coed N = 7993	Male College N = 3550	Female Coed N = 3152	Female College N = 1700
Small student body	63.6	68.2	74.0	64.4
Flexibility of liberal arts curriculum	37.0	41.6	51.0	59.4
Small class & close faculty-student ties	68.1	73.9	71.3	70.5
Activities less competitive than at larger schools	13.1	12.9	5.8	2.7
Broad background offered by the liberal arts	44.8	51.8	59.7	70.9
Relatives attended the college	8.2	7.3	7.6	6.8
Close friends were attending	4.3	4.3	3.0	1.8
College was near home	10.4	7.0	9.6	4.9
College was far away	4.6	3.9	8.5	7.0
Scholarship was granted	22.2	21.8	21.1	20.9
College noted for strength in math & science	28.7	31.4	20.6	9.4
Admission was assured	9.6	8.8	8.7	6.1
Impressed by college facilities	20.0	25.9	29.3	42.1
Impressed by science facilities	11.9	13.6	9.2	7.8
Promotion of alumni	5.9	9.0	5.0	6.7
Opposite sex close at hand	11.8	0.8	20.5	6.5
Recommendation by school counselor	12.3	10.8	10.6	12.4
Recommendation by high school science teacher	6.2	5.4	6.1	4.5
Parents wanted liberal arts college	10.3	9.7	15.4	21.8
Influence of admissions staff	6.7	9.0	9.0	8.1
Quality of students in the college	40.2	52.1	55.0	72.1
Influence of church	2.5	2.7	4.8	0.4

Snelling, W. Rodman and Boruch, Robert
Factors Influencing Student Choice of College and Course of Study.
(Reprinted from Journal of Chemical Education, Vol. 47, Page 329
May, 1970.

Table 25 G-1

ADDED FACTORS IN COLLEGE CHOICE LISTED AS IMPORTANT BY 226 MATRICULANTS

1. Meeting people from different life styles and geographical areas.
2. 4-0-4 plan most important factor in decision.
3. Loved size, location - but almost didn't apply because of lack of coeducation.
4. Attitude of students already enrolled. (Excitement and positive attitude.)
5. Presence of church facilities nearby.
6. Recommendation from alumni.
7. Admissions material.
8. Impressed by athletic attitude.
9. Athletics interest shown by football coach.
10. Emotional lessons to be learned.
11. Combination of all factors.
12. All classes are taught by regular Faculty - not graduate students.
13. Meeting basketball and baseball coaches and liking them.
14. Nearness to home.
15. Music Department facilities.
16. Faculty primarily interested in teaching the students rather than conducting their own research with graduate students.
17. All women's colleges reduced deterrent of all male.
18. Interview and influence campus visit had plus "intimate environment."
19. Unnatural environment with separation of sexes.
20. College's concern and interest with applicants and entering freshmen.
21. High standards and responsibility.
22. Only an undergraduate school.
23. Provides excellent medical school preparation.
24. Noted strong unity between blacks and sincere attitudes striving for understanding other races.
25. Statistics on graduated classes. (Per cent entering medicine, law, graduate school, etc.)
26. Concentration on undergraduates. Without graduate students there is no detraction from educational quality.
27. Credit for Advanced Placement exams.
28. Personal rapport between staff and students and administration and students.
29. Diversity of students' background.
30. Attitudes toward liberal arts education - athletics.
31. People being able to express their ideas.
32. Fine prospects of being admitted to the law school of choice.
33. Opening an Ivy League tradition for future generations of family.
34. Unhurried quiet atmosphere.
35. Pressure on athletics.
36. Student guide: Important factor making decision to apply Early Decision.
37. Overall quality academic calendar.
38. Five-College cooperation makes wide education possibilities.
39. Competitiveness of admissions.
40. Individualistic concepts.
41. Respect of Amherst alumni
42. No physical education requirement.

Fall 1974 - Amherst College
Items volunteered in addition to the 47 printed on the questionnaire.

Table 26 G-2

ADDED FACTORS IN COLLEGE CHOICE LISTED AS IMPORTANT BY 68 INTERVIEWEES WHO DID NOT APPLY TO AMHERST

1. Distinguished alumni and associates known through acquaintances.
2. Percentage of student body of minority/ethnic groups.
3. General philosophy of the college (administration) toward education learning.
4. Early Decision option - early evaluation.
5. Alumni interest.
6. Combined seven-year undergraduate medical program. Research opportunities.
7. Lack of unnecessary requisites. (No department language requirement.)
8. Computer facilities.
9. Proximity to large city.
10. Financial requirement.
11. Liberalness with respect to Advanced Placement credit.
12. Liberal arts program strong but diverse.
13. Good recommendations from professors.
14. Total cost.
15. Special academic programs; Advanced Placement sophomore standing.
16. CLEP Program.
17. Intramural sports program.
18. Diversity of extra-curricular programs.
19. Number of required courses.
20. Coeducation.
21. Faculty readily accessible.
22. Emphasis on teaching as opposed to research.
23. Degree of student/faculty interaction.

Fall 1974
Items volunteered in addition to the 47 printed on the questionnaire.

Table 27 G-3

ADDED FACTORS IN COLLEGE CHOICE LISTED AS IMPORTANT BY 106 GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

1. Proximity to Boston.
2. Most students talk to past students who attended.
3. Feelings that Amherst offers the finest undergraduate education in the country.
4. Climate (too cold).
5. Ivy League pull still strong.
6. Prestige.
7. Interview far too important - students turn off because they don't like interviewer.
8. Expansion of graduate school preparation.
9. Reaction to representative visiting from Amherst.
10. SAT scores.
11. Cost.
12. Brochure.
13. Alumni interview or follow-up.
14. Diversity of living situation.
15. Friends attending.
16. Selectivity and/or lack of such.
17. Recent school alumnae at college.
18. Proximity to women's colleges helps off set all male.

Fall 1974
Items volunteered in addition to the 47 printed on the questionnaire.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Selected Items Relative to College Choice

Anderson, C. A., Bowman, M. J., and Tinto, V. Where Colleges Are and Who Attends: Effects of Accessibility on College Attendance. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972, 303 pp.

Astin, Alexander W., et al. The American Freshman National Norms for Fall 1974. Los Angeles, California: Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the American Council on Education, 1974.

Bowers, T. A., and Pugh, R. C. Factors Underlying College Choice by Students and Parents. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1973, 14 (May) 220-224.

Clark, Burton R., et al. Channels of Entry. Chapter 4, Students and Colleges: Interaction and Change. Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1972, pp. 55-100.

CRC Center Notes on Institutional Research, Vol. 2, No. 2. College Research Center, September, 1973, 8 pp.

Corts, Thomas E. Needed: Truth in Labeling. Colleges Should be Consumer-Minded. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1973, 7 (May 14) p. 16.

Cramer, S. H. and Stevic, R. R. Research on the Transition from School to College: A Review of the 1968-69 Literature. College Board Review, 1969, No. 73 (Fall) p. 22ff.

Davis, Junius A. The Desegregation/Integration Dilemma in Higher Education: Implications for Research from Minority Student Experiences. In U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor. 92nd Congress, 2nd Session. Educational Research: Prospect and Priorities. Washington, 1972, pp. 100-116.

Fenske, R. H., Scott, C. S. and Carmody, J. F. College Student Migration. ACT Research Report No. 54. American College Testing Program, December, 1972, 23 pp.

Fenske, R. H. and Scott, C. S. College Students' Goals, Plans, and Background Characteristics: A Synthesis of Three Empirical Studies. Research in Higher Education, 1973, 1 (No.2) pp. 101-118.

Kirkpatrick, Robert L., Jr. Annual Report of the Dean of Admissions, Wesleyan University. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University, Office of Admissions, 1973.

McCaffrey, K. J., and King, E. (Eds.) College/Career Choice: Right Student, Right Time, Right Place. American College Testing Program, Monograph 9, 1973, 146 pp.

Menacker, Julius. Improving the Admission Information Efforts of Institutions of Higher Education. The National ACAC Journal, 1972, 17 (May) pp. 1-3.

Morey, Ann I. Institutional Images: Importance to Student Choice of College. Paper read at American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April, 1972.

Mundel, David S. Student Choice and College Going. Change, 6, No. 6 Summer 1974, 50-51.

Reid, W. A. and Holley, B. J. An Application of Repertory Grid Techniques to the Study of Choice of University. The British Journal of Educational Psychology, 1972, 42 (February) pp. 52-59.

The Sloan Study Consortium. The Financing of a College Education. Hanover, New Hampshire: Consortium on Financing Higher Education, 1974.

Snelling, W. Rodman, and Boruch, Robert. Factors Influencing Student Choice of College and Course of Study. Journal of Chemical Education, 47, 5, 326-330, May 1970.

Spies, Richard R. The Future of Private Colleges. The Effect of Rising Costs on College Choice. Princeton, New Jersey: Industrial Relations Section, Department of Economics, Princeton University, 1973, 70 pp.

Stahmann, R. F., Hanson, G. R., and Whittlesey, R. R. Parent and Student Perceptions of Influences on College Choice. The National ACAC Journal, 1971, 16 (July) pp. 21-22.

Tillery, Dale. Distribution and Differentiation of Youth. A Study of Transition from School to College. Cambridge: Ballinger, 1973, 165 pp.

Tinto, Vincent. The Effect of College Proximity Upon Rates of College Attendance. Paper read at American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, February, 1973.

Wall, Edward B. Report to the Faculty of the Dean of Admission (with appendices). Amherst, Massachusetts: Amherst College, Office of Admission, September 11, 1973.

Wall, Edward B. Admission to Amherst College in 1974 - Twenty-Eighth Annual Report to Secondary Schools. Amherst, Massachusetts: Amherst College, Office of Admission 1974, 6 pp.